

Literary movements

Metaphysical poetry (1600s)

- ✓ Elaborate, surprising **conceits** compare unrelated things (love = compass, soul = gold, etc.)
- ✓ Explores **love, faith, death, time, and the soul** through logical arguments
- ✓ Filled with **paradox, wit, direct address**, and philosophical reasoning
- ✓ Often blends **science, religion, and emotion** in the same poem

Romanticism (late 1700s—mid 1800s)

- ✓ Nature is powerful, spiritual, and reflects human emotion
- ✓ Celebrates **emotion, imagination, individuality**, and intuition over reason
- ✓ Features passionate speakers, rebels, dreamers, or outsiders
- ✓ May include the **supernatural, Gothic elements**, or nostalgia for the past

Transcendentalism (1830s—1850s)

- ✓ Nature reveals **spiritual truth** and connects people to something greater
- ✓ Values **individual intuition, self-reliance**, and nonconformity
- ✓ Believes people are inherently good and capable of moral growth
- ✓ Often sounds philosophical, hopeful, and idealistic

Realism (mid-to-late 1800s)

- ✓ Focuses on **ordinary people** facing believable social or moral conflicts
- ✓ Detailed psychological characterization instead of dramatic plots
- ✓ Everyday settings with subtle, objective narration
- ✓ Explores society without romanticizing or sensationalizing it

Regionalism (late 1800s)

- ✓ Setting is almost a character itself
- ✓ Highlights **local customs, dialects, traditions**, and landscape
- ✓ Strong sense of place shapes characters and conflicts
- ✓ Often nostalgic or affectionate toward a specific region

Naturalism (late 1800s—early 1900s)

- ✓ Characters are controlled by **environment, heredity, poverty, or fate**
- ✓ Bleak, pessimistic tone with little individual control
- ✓ Harsh realism—survival, violence, addiction, or social inequality
- ✓ Human beings are portrayed almost scientifically rather than heroically

Harlem Renaissance (1920s—1930s)

- ✓ Explores **Black identity, pride, culture**, and resistance to racism
- ✓ Celebrates African American voices, history, and artistic expression
- ✓ Often influenced by **jazz, blues**, and vernacular speech
- ✓ Balances hope, resilience, and social criticism

Modernism (c. 1910—1945)

- ✓ Fragmented structure and stream of consciousness
- ✓ Characters often experience **alienation, uncertainty**, or isolation
- ✓ Symbolism and ambiguity are more important than plot
- ✓ Searches for meaning in a fractured modern world

Postmodernism (c. 1945—present)

- ✓ Questions truth, reality, and even storytelling itself
- ✓ Uses irony, metafiction, unreliable narrators, and nonlinear structure
- ✓ Blends genres and embraces ambiguity or contradiction
- ✓ Often playful, self-aware, and skeptical of absolute meaning